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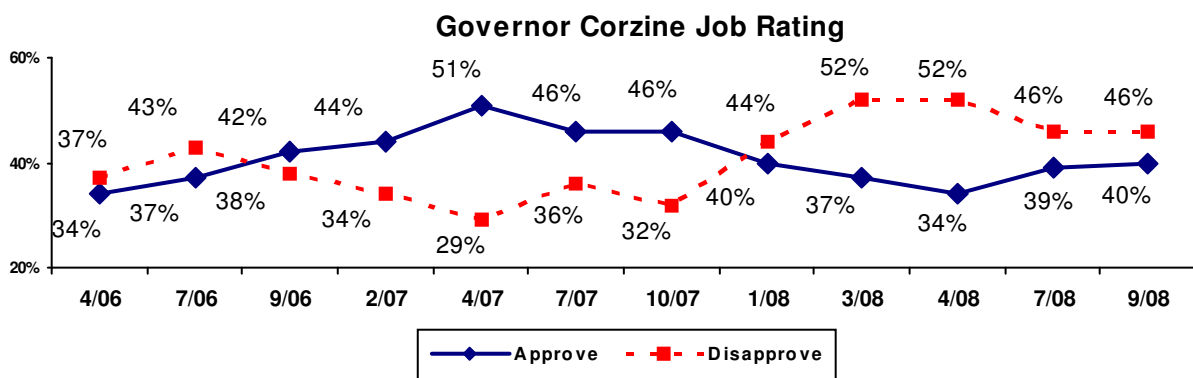
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GOV. CORZINE AND TOLL HIKE, TAKE 2

Voters want someone new in '09; Oppose revised toll plan

Governor Jon Corzine's upside down job rating is basically unchanged from the summer, but only 1-in-4 voters feel he should be re-elected in 2009. The latest *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* also found that the revised toll road plan unveiled this month is being met with the same level of opposition as the governor's original proposal earlier this year.

Currently, 40% of New Jersey adults approve of how their governor is handling his job, compared to 46% who disapprove. Corzine does slightly worse among registered voters, holding an upside down 40% to 49% job rating with this group.



These ratings are basically unchanged from the summer. Governor Corzine has net positive job ratings only among his fellow Democrats – 55% approve to 28% disapprove. Among independents he stands at 32% approve to 54% disapprove and among Republicans his job rating is 22% approve to 69% disapprove.

The governor's ratings remain slightly better than the state legislature's. Only 29% of New Jerseyans approve of the job their legislature is doing, while 47% disapprove. However,

that doesn't mean that voters are ready to give the governor a free pass to a second term.

Currently, just 24% of registered voters in the state say that Corzine should be re-elected in 2009, while nearly two-thirds (65%) feel it is time to have someone else in office. Even the governor's fellow Democrats – by a 50% to 37% margin – are more likely to feel it is time for a change in the governor's chair than say Corzine should be returned to office.

“Jon Corzine's job approval ratings have recovered somewhat from the all-time low measured in April. However, those positive numbers are a bit tepid, since many voters who say they approve of Corzine's performance would still prefer to see someone else in his place.” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

The governor's standing has not been helped by the recently unveiled proposal for raising tolls. Back in January, the governor announced a proposal to raise tolls about 50% every four years in order to reduce state debt and fund transportation projects. That plan was met with stiff public opposition and has apparently been shelved.

This month, a new plan was announced that would increase tolls on the Turnpike and Parkway by slightly more than double in the next four years and raise Atlantic City Expressway tolls as well. The new revenue would be used for improving the state's transportation infrastructure.

This revised toll plan is not as widely known as the original plan was upon its unveiling – just 35% of Garden State residents have heard a lot and 47% have heard a little about the new plan. This compares to 57% who had heard a lot about the original proposal in January. Despite the lower awareness, the current plan is being met with similar levels of opposition from the New Jersey public.

Currently, 53% oppose the new plan while just 19% support it. Another 28% have no firm opinion at this time. When the governor's original plan was proposed in January, a similar 56% opposed it to 15% who supported it.

Even though the currently proposed toll hikes are more modest than the original plan, most New Jerseyans (62%) believe the increases are more than is actually needed to meet the state's transportation needs over the next fifteen years. Only 24% say these hikes are the right amount and just 7% feel they are too little to meet future transportation funding needs.

The poll also found a split in public opinion on appropriate uses for the new revenue. By a small margin, New Jerseyans favor (48%) rather than oppose (43%) using some of the new funds to widen sections of the existing toll roads.

By a similarly small margin, residents oppose (45%) rather than favor (42%) using some of this money to build a new rail tunnel under the Hudson River. This split comes even though most residents (59%) believe that a new rail tunnel would help reduce congestion on New Jersey highways.

“With public hearings starting this week, the administration has its work cut out not just to sell the toll hike plan itself, but to convince residents that the projects to be funded by these new tolls are really needed,” said Murray.

The poll also noted some interesting regional differences in how the new toll money should be used. Residents of North Jersey give a small margin of approval to using the revenue for both road widening (46% to 42%) and a new rail tunnel (46% to 43%). Central Jersey residents are slightly in favor of road widening (49% to 45%), but oppose funding the rail tunnel (38% to 46%). South Jerseyans, though, register strong support for using the revenue to widen the toll roads (58% to 39%) and equally strong opposition to funding the rail tunnel (29% to 54%).

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted by telephone with 808 New Jersey adults from September 11 to 14, 2008. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.5 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute and originally published by the Gannett New Jersey newspaper group (Asbury Park Press, Courier-Post, Courier News, Daily Journal, Daily Record, and Home News Tribune).

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Jon Corzine is doing as governor?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	40%	40%	38%	55%	32%	22%
Disapprove	46%	49%	30%	28%	54%	69%
(VOL) Don't know	15%	11%	32%	17%	14%	9%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	808	709	99	300	291	187

TREND:	Sept 2008	July 2008	April 2008	March 2008	January 2008	October 2007	July 2007	April 2007	February 2007	Sept 2006	July 2006	April 2006
Approve	40%	39%	34%	37%	40%	46%	46%	51%	44%	42%	37%	34%
Disapprove	46%	46%	52%	52%	44%	32%	36%	29%	34%	38%	43%	37%
(VOL) Don't know	15%	16%	14%	11%	16%	22%	18%	20%	22%	20%	20%	29%
<i>Unwtd N</i>	808	1004	803	805	804	801	800	804	801	800	802	803

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the state legislature is doing?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Approve	29%	29%	31%	42%	25%	18%
Disapprove	47%	50%	35%	33%	55%	61%
(VOL) Don't know	23%	21%	34%	25%	20%	21%
Unwtd N	808	709	99	300	291	187

TREND:	September 2008	July 2008	April 2008	March 2008	October 2007	February 2007
Approve	29%	27%	29%	28%	33%	35%
Disapprove	47%	45%	53%	50%	41%	40%
(VOL) Don't know	23%	28%	18%	22%	26%	25%
Unwtd N	808	1004	803	805	801	801

3. Looking ahead to the governor's election in 2009, do you think that Jon Corzine should be re-elected, or do you think that it is time to have someone else in office?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Should be re-elected	23%	24%	20%	37%	19%	7%
Time to have someone else in office	64%	65%	62%	50%	71%	80%
(VOL) Don't know	12%	11%	18%	13%	10%	12%
Unwtd N	808	709	99	300	291	187

4. Just in the past week, a new plan was announced to increase tolls on the state's toll roads. Under the revised plan, Turnpike and Parkway tolls would go up slightly more than double in the next four years, and Atlantic City Expressway tolls would increase as well. The increased revenue will be used for improving the state's transportation infrastructure. How much have you heard about this new plan – a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID			TOLL ROAD USE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Weekly	Monthly or less	Never
Lot	35%	35%	35%	34%	34%	40%	37%	35%	28%
Little	47%	47%	45%	46%	50%	43%	47%	48%	43%
Nothing	17%	17%	20%	20%	15%	16%	16%	17%	28%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Unwtd N	808	709	99	300	291	187	359	376	67

TREND:	September 2008	March 2008*	January 2008*
Lot	35%	53%	57%
Little	47%	31%	30%
Nothing	17%	14%	13%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%	n/a
Unwtd N	808	805	804

* Question wording in prior polls was: "How much have you heard about the governor's plan to raise tolls about 50 percent every four years over the next 14 years in order to reduce state debt and fund transportation projects?"

5. Based on what you have read or heard do you favor or oppose this plan, or do you have no opinion?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID			TOLL PLAN AWARENESS			TOLL ROAD USE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lot	Little	None	Weekly	Monthly or less	Never
Favor	19%	21%	12%	24%	18%	16%	22%	22%	7%	20%	21%	11%
Oppose	53%	53%	56%	47%	58%	60%	65%	48%	43%	57%	50%	48%
No opinion	28%	27%	32%	29%	24%	24%	13%	30%	50%	23%	29%	41%
Unwtd N	808	709	99	300	291	187	289	381	133	359	376	67

TREND:	September 2008	March 2008*	January 2008*
Favor	19%	15%	15%
Oppose	53%	56%	56%
No opinion	28%	29%	29%
Unwtd N	808	805	804

* Prior poll results based on original toll plan.

IF INITIALLY NO OPINION: If you had to choose, as of right now, do you more favor or oppose the idea? [TABLE BELOW INCLUDES "LEANERS":]

TREND:	September 2008	March 2008*	January 2008*
Favor and lean favor	26%	22%	24%
Oppose and lean oppose	67%	74%	70%
No opinion firm	7%	4%	6%
Unwtd N	808	805	804

* Prior poll results based on original toll plan.

6. Thinking about the money needed to meet our transportation needs over the next fifteen years, are these proposed toll hikes too much, too little, or about the right amount?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID			TOLL PLAN AWARENESS			TOLL ROAD USE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lot	Little	None	Weekly	Monthly or less	Never
Too much	62%	62%	62%	60%	60%	69%	71%	56%	62%	68%	57%	62%
Too little	7%	7%	8%	8%	7%	7%	4%	10%	8%	7%	7%	8%
About the right amount	24%	23%	26%	25%	27%	17%	21%	27%	23%	21%	27%	26%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	7%	4%	7%	6%	7%	5%	8%	7%	4%	9%	5%
Unwtd N	808	709	99	300	291	187	289	381	133	359	376	67

[QUESTIONS 7 AND 8 WERE ROTATED]

7. Do you favor or oppose using some of the new revenue to widen sections of the Turnpike, Parkway, and A.C. Expressway?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID			TOLL PLAN AWARENESS			TOLL ROAD USE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lot	Little	None	Weekly	Monthly or less	Never
Favor	48%	51%	36%	52%	45%	52%	42%	52%	53%	53%	48%	33%
Oppose	43%	41%	52%	39%	48%	38%	50%	39%	41%	42%	42%	55%
No opinion	9%	8%	12%	9%	6%	10%	8%	9%	6%	6%	10%	12%
Unwtd N	808	709	99	300	291	187	289	381	133	359	376	67

8. Do you favor or oppose using some of the new revenue to build a new rail tunnel under the Hudson River?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID			TOLL PLAN AWARENESS			TOLL ROAD USE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lot	Little	None	Weekly	Monthly or less	Never
Favor	42%	42%	37%	50%	39%	33%	37%	42%	48%	46%	40%	31%
Oppose	45%	45%	47%	39%	49%	51%	53%	41%	43%	44%	45%	58%
No opinion	14%	13%	15%	11%	13%	16%	10%	17%	9%	11%	16%	11%
Unwtd N	808	709	99	300	291	187	289	381	133	359	376	67

9. Do you agree or disagree that building another rail tunnel to New York will help reduce congestion on New Jersey highways?

	TOTAL	REG VOTER		PARTY ID			TOLL PLAN AWARENESS			TOLL ROAD USE		
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lot	Little	None	Weekly	Monthly or less	Never
Agree	59%	58%	64%	66%	56%	54%	53%	62%	66%	59%	61%	57%
Disagree	32%	32%	30%	25%	35%	39%	39%	28%	28%	33%	30%	34%
(VOL) Don't know	9%	9%	6%	9%	9%	7%	8%	10%	6%	8%	9%	9%
Unwtd N	808	709	99	300	291	187	289	381	133	359	376	67

10. How often do you drive on a New Jersey toll road, that is the Turnpike, Parkway, or A.C. Expressway – at least four days a week, at least once a week, at least once a month, less often, or never?

TREND:	September 2008	January 2008
At least four days a week	22%	25%
At least once a week	23%	26%
At least once a month	26%	22%
Less often	18%	16%
Never	9%	9%
(VOL) Don't know	1%	1%
Unwtd N	808	804

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Poll* was conducted and analyzed by the Monmouth University Polling Institute research staff. The telephone interviews were collected by Braun Research on September 11-14, 2008 with a statewide random sample of 808 adult residents. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported by gender or party identification, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

It is the Monmouth University Polling Institute's policy to conduct surveys of all adult New Jersey residents, including voters and non-voters, on issues which affect the state. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.

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